

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans: Policy and Prospects

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# Public/Private Conservation Partnership

- Voluntary action supported by USDA Soil Conservation Service since 1935
- Public sharing of costs of on-farm conservation
  - Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act in 1936
  - Land Utilization Program in 1937

# First Chief of SCS

- Hugh Hammond Bennett - “The only way in which water pollution due to erosion silt can be effectively controlled is by the adoption of soil and water conservation practices applied in accordance with the needs and capabilities of the land.” (1945 - before a Congressional committee)

# Significance of Animal Agriculture

- Livestock and poultry production generated \$93 billion in revenues in 1996
  - Critical to food supply and economy
- Agriculture, with sound conservation, also produces
  - Healthy soil
  - Clean air and water
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Aesthetically pleasing landscapes

# Environmental Impacts

- *Pfiesteria* in the Chesapeake Bay
- *Hypoxia* in the Gulf of Mexico
- Large Lagoon Spills (12 States)
- Offensive Odors

# Issues of Concern for NRCS

- Pollution of water from improperly managed animal feeding operations
- Land-based manure nutrient management strategies that are inadequate
  - Manure nutrients produced surpass the capacity of the land to assimilate them, in some locations

# Voluntary, Locally Led Approach

- NRCS supports an approach that is:
  - Science based
  - Site specific
  - Voluntary
  - Incentive based
  - Locally led
  - Recognizes financial constraints of producers
- Regulations important for very large, high risk CAFOs and some other very specific situations

# NRCS' Conservation Programs

- NRCS' Conservation Programs offer:
  - research and technology transfer
  - information
  - education
  - technical and financial assistance
  - innovative pilot and policy approaches

*Also used by many producers as tools to help them comply with regulations*

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance

- Developed during 1999 and 2000, and included receiving public input during 120-day comment period
- Provides technical guidance to help public and private technical specialists assist AFO owners and operators with their development of CNMPs

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance

- Objective: help AFO owners and operators achieve both agricultural production and natural resource conservation goals

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans - CNMPs

- Subset of conservation plan - unique to AFOs
- Continuation of management and conservation practices
- Site specific
- Voluntary
- Focus is nutrient and sediment aspects of water quality (RMS level quality criteria for soil and water)

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans - CNMPs

- Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage
- Land Treatment Practices
- Nutrient Management
- Record Keeping
- Feed Management
- Other Utilization Activities

# Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans - CNMP

- CNMP Technical Guidance does not establish criteria to specifically address:
  - Air Quality
  - Odors
  - Pests
  - Pathogens
  - Pharmaceuticals
  - Heavy metals
- Expect CNMP Technical Guidance to evolve over time to better address these concerns

# CNMP Workload - Complex and Large

- Public and private sectors need to collaborate
- State Conservationist will establish and implement a process for:
  - Certified Conservation Planners
  - Certified Specialists
    - Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage
    - Land Treatment Practices
    - Nutrient Management

# Need for a Greater Mix of Policy Tools, Incentives, and Partnerships

- Economically Profitable Conservation Technologies
- Public/Private Collaboration to Enhance Technical Assistance Capacity
- Improved Economic Training and Tools for Field Staff
- Policies to Stimulate Conservation Technology Innovation

# Need for a Greater Mix of Policy Tools, Incentives, and Partnerships

- New Risk Management Tools
- Expanded and Enhanced Partnerships
- Targeting Incentives
- Alternative Uses for Animal Residuals

# NRCS' Actions to Help Livestock and Poultry Producers

- Working to ensure that flexible innovative, and credible technical tools and approaches are being prepared for CNMP development and implementation
- Working to ensure that the knowledge, skills, and support are in place for NRCS and partner field staff to provide quality technical assistance

# NRCS' Actions to Help Livestock and Poultry Producers

- Working to enhance the financial tools available to assist with CNMP implementation
- Working with the private sector to ensure that third-party vendors have access to training, technical information and tools, and certification processes

# NRCS' Actions to Help Livestock and Poultry Producers

- Developing a more integrated approach with partner USDA agencies for addressing AFO needs, especially with USDA's principal research agencies
- Working to build an outcome reporting capacity in order to quantify the economic, environmental, and other major benefits and effects from CNMP implementation

## NRCS' Commitment to Water Quality

- Respecting and supporting States calling the shots when it comes to defining water uses, establishing water quality standards, and establishing priorities for action
- Continuing to emphasize voluntary action by landowners and landusers
- Supporting research that helps landowners and landusers minimize the impact of their activities on water quality

## NRCS' Commitment to Water Quality

- Training employees to make sure they are equipped to identify and help landowners and landusers solve water quality problems
- Providing financial and other incentives to farmers and ranchers for practicing good stewardship

